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That the impact of the college experience is a product of more than just the classroom and library has become a recognized fact. Many variables determine the content of what a student learns and also the degree and direction of his personal growth and development. This study sought to examine one facet of the learning environment--the house within a residence hall. The data and observations were part of a larger study, and were obtained from 27 men's residence houses, each house having about 50 members. The House Analysis Survey (HAS) was used to assess inter-hall and house differences. The basic topic investigated in this study was the character and extent of the climate of learning within the residence hall-houses and the relationship of the learning climate to freshman attitudes and academic performance. Among the list of general observations and conclusions were: (1) the characteristics of residence hall groups vary extensively, (2) undertones of non-intellectual behavioral norms exist, (3) houses differ in their climate of learning as perceived by residence, and, (4) the climate of learning has no demonstrable effect on freshman academic performance when the influence of academic ability is removed. (Author/KJ)

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PEER GROUP INFLUENCE, HOUSE GROUP DIFFERENCES AND THE RESIDENCE HALL CLIMATE OF LEARNING

Paper presented by Dr. G. Robert Standing
American Personnel and Guidance Association Convention
Las Vegas, April 1, 1969*

Introduction

That the impact of the college experience is a product of more than just the classroom and library has become a well recognized, but not a completely understood fact. More and more have we come to realize that many variables operate in determining not only the content of what the student learns, but also the degree and direction of his personal growth and development. This study sought to examine one such facet of the learning environment to which college students are frequently exposed.

The data and observations which follow were part of a larger study of the quality and character of group life within mens' residence halls at Michigan State University, and more explicitly, within 27 residence hall houses. A house, normally housing about 50 students, is the major administrative subdivision within a residence hall. Three houses were randomly selected in each of nine different large halls.

The house was the principal focus of our concern as it was viewed as a basic context in which students, particularly freshmen, interact and in which they are introduced to peer group expectations and influence. The general research problem was trifold: First, an attempt was made to develop a multivariate description, a typology, of the 27 houses using the statistical technique multiple discriminant analysis. Second, grade-point-averages (gpa) and measures of intellectual disposition of freshmen residing in different types of houses or house groups, defined in the typology, were compared. The primary intent was to determine whether or not the identifiable types of houses influenced academic performance and/or attitudes toward the academic experience. An elaboration of the typology of house groups will not be presented here. Suffice it to say that the residence groups differed extensively along many variables. Third, and the topic of this paper, the character and extent of the climate of learning within the residence hall house and the relationship of the learning climate to freshman attitudes and academic performance were studied. In addition the impact of peer group influence was considered.

The Climate of Learning

Of particular interest and apparent significance in assessing the impact of higher education, is what has been loosely referred to as the "climate of

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learning" or "environment for learning" (the terms would generally seem to be synonymous in most contexts in which they appear).[2] The phrase seems to reflect a broad, vaguely defined (if defined at all) set of variables suggesting the degree to which students' behavior, values, and/or attitudes are directed toward somewhat intangible intellectual concerns, as opposed to more traditionally collegiate, vocational, social, or even anti-intellectual orientations. Stereotypes, traditions, the quality and nature of students admitted, faculty, physical facilities, the community setting and the interaction of these variables all tend to define an atmosphere which, to the degree that it seems to be conducive to learning, represents a guage by which institutions or subdivisions thereof are subjectively judged.

Theoretical Orientation

The research literature in small group behavior, reference group theory, and the nature of peer group influence provided the foundation for the assumption that life within a residence hall house could have an impact on the educational experience of student residents. It was felt that students' attitude and their conformity to the academic goals of the institution might be modified as a result of the frequently highly personalized and significant interaction occurring in living situations, particularly for freshmen confronting the college environment for the first time.

A basic principle involved in describing the impact of house life is suggested by Newcomb, "that individuals who spend a good deal of time together -- particularly if they do so without a sense of constraint -- jointly create norms, concerning their common interests, by which each of them is influenced."[3] In order to maximize the educative outcomes, Newcomb proposes three applications of the principle: (1) promotion of a reference group of such a size that some selectivity of association is allowed, (2) awareness of the fact that living arrangements provide the greatest single source of interaction for most students, and (3) the overlap of classroom experiences with living-group membership in order to increase the possibility of shared "intellectual excitement."

A cohesive group tends to develop when the group is attractive, for several reasons. But within an informal social group, such as in a residence hall, its attractiveness will be "mostly affected by the extent to which one has satisfactory relationships and friendships with other members of the group."[4] To the extent that the house and its residents can satisfy such inter-personal needs as status, acceptance, and goal fulfillment, identification with the house will be pronounced.

The term "cohesion" has been defined in many ways. Most authors agree, however, that it generally refers to "the degree to which the members of the group desire to remain in the group."[5] One might be tempted to place a value judgment prematurely on the desirability of creating a highly cohesive house or residence hall. Several significant studies suggest the tenuousness of

such a judgment, for the norms and other points of attraction of a cohesive group are not necessarily productive or consistent with the goals of some larger social system, such as the institution of which the group may be a part. "This power that groups have," notes Newcomb, "can be applied to educational advantage, to educational detriment, or to neither. Very often in my own university I have seen that the norms of student groups are contra-educational."[6] Both Stogdill[7] and Etzioni[8] comment on the ambivalent characteristic of cohesion in their major theoretical treatises of group-dimensionality. Stogdill views both cohesion and productivity as outputs of groups rather than suggesting a causal relationship between them.

Consistent with the possibility of "contra-educational" functioning of group norms, Lozoff concludes, for example, that fraternity life for at least some students (those lacking in academic aptitude and ability) may have provided them with sufficient security and self-esteem to allow them to survive in the academic milieu.[9] The extent to which what might normally be considered anti-intellectual behavior may actually serve an adaptive function is suggested in her elaboration of a thought from Deutsch:

> "Dr. Helene Deutsch speaks of group participation among the younger adolescents as providing an opportunity for peer-approved regressive behavior in the service of slowing growth so that disintegration can be avoided, and progress eventually abetted. Thus, even some of the regressive aspects of fraternity living may have had functional value for students who needed relief from the strains of moving too rapidly toward independence, heterosexual mutuality and confrontation of the differences in the values, ideas and behavior of people."[10]

Thus, highly cohesive student groups may not be too unlike cohesive industrial employee groups which have been found to be effective in maintaining group standards, but these standards may be either high or, conversely, low regarding productivity.[11]

One could conclude that even though a residence hall house may be highly attractive to its residents, in and of itself this will not produce an exciting intellectual environment. Rather, it may well help to insulate residents from the rigors of the academic community.

The Ambiguous New Situation

Let me suggest the way in which peer group influence may have its impact on residents. The university environment is a complex social system in its own right. The student new to the university or college environment, though in many ways having been conditioned to know what to expect, must nevertheless confront many new and perplexing situations, particularly if he must live away from home.[12] The extent of his "up-rootedness" will of course depend upon many variables. He may already have a highly developed set of personal relationships in his new environment through well-established friendships or

he may not. His mental and emotional equipment may be well adapted to cope with the ambiguities and anxieties of his new situation, or they may be lacking. Several studies suggest that though students tend to have some "valid idea of the relative strength of various pressures in the new environment...(they) also have a general, stereotyped, and perhaps idealized image of college life which only imperfectly relates to what they are about to find..."[13] Eisenstadt theorizes that a complex, ambiguous situation may give rise to an individual anchoring himself within a reference group and/or to a set of what he describes as "reference norms." He states:

> "...there exists a multiplicity of reference norms and groups to which an individual may direct himself and that his choice between them is very largely determined by the kind of social situation he is in. These different reference norms are evoked when the impact of the institutional structure on the individual puts him in a somewhat problematic situation from the point of view of his status and collectivity aspirations. Thus it may be suggested that the kinds of reference orientations and norms that will be evoked in a given situation...will depend on the interplay between the particular social situation in which an individual finds himself and his perception of this situation in terms of his status-image or levels of aspiration."[14]

By way of application, freshmen entering the college confront several conflicts both subtle and direct. As they strive for consistency and goal fulfillment they are inclined toward various groups and subcultures which meet these ends. Within their residence hall and in particular within their house, they tend to make an interpersonal investment in one another through their awareness of their shared predicament and of the interaction with their peers that will necessarily persist over several months in the house. If returning students are housed in the hall, new students may be attracted to them for the "old hands" can introduce the new students to the subtleties of the system in terms of a "minimal level of compliance" to the broader system as suggested by Hodgkins.[15] And in addition they can also be introduced to instruments of goal fulfillment in terms of needs for acceptance, social status and prestige. If the relationships within the house for whatever reasons are positive and goal fulfilling then the likelihood of the house becoming a significant reference group is substantially enhanced.

The preceding should in no way be construed to suggest that a residence hall house will invariably function as a reference group for any or all of its members. What I would like to suggest is that the <u>potential</u> is there. A priori, the specific conditions that would give rise to reference group status of a house in the context of many competing groups and norms within <u>and</u> beyond the institution is speculative.

Research Design*

The House Analysis Survey (HAS)

Most of the data assessing the characteristics of house life including the climate of learning were obtained during winter quarter, 1965, using an experimental instrument labeled the House Analysis Survey (HAS). It consists of 128 questionnaire items in response to which residents report their impressions of various characteristics of house life, such as "participation in intramural sports," one's "ability to study in the house," and the "climate of learning."

Sixty per cent (N=884) of the 1481 winter quarter residents of the 27 houses in the study completed the HAS. Of concern was the fact that in several houses the percentage of participating residents was disappointingly small. Nevertheless, it was decided to proceed with the analysis using data from all 27 groups. It was felt that the study was exploratory in nature, and since students served as reporters of group life in completing the survey, the responses would nevertheless give some picture (albeit possibly biased) of house life. The very fact that the degree of participation did vary dramatically was in and of itself of interest in the study. There were several questions as to what characteristics of house life might give rise to 86% participation from one house and only 23% in another.

Results

General Characteristics of House Life

Results of the study, which follow, suggest some of the general characteristics of residence hall life as perceived by residents.

In Table 1 mean scores from the responses of the 884 residents to 20 HAS items and also the range of mean scores of the 27 houses are reported. Based on their "observations and opinions of conditions within" their houses, residents were asked to rate house life on a nine-point scale on each of the 20 items. A comparative analysis of individual house mean scores will not be considered here. It is sufficient to indicate that house means on many of the items varied extensively. Referring to Table 1, items 27 and 31, ("Friendliness within the house" and roommate satisfaction), received the highest ratings of this set of items (in terms of being viewed positively). Apparently interpersonal relationships tend to be positive within the houses. The next most favorably rated items, numbers 33 and 34, indicate an overall general satisfaction with life in both the hall and in the house within the hall. The degree of satisfaction however does vary between the houses as can be noted from the range of house mean scores.

The item receiving the least favorable rating concerned the "intellectual and cultural life of the house" (#26). Judging from the overall ratings it would

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*A more complete elaboration of the design of the larger study of which the research reported herein is a part may be found in the author's doctoral dissertation (see Footnote #1).

Table 1. Mean scores, standard deviations, and range of house means from 20 "aspects of life" within 27 men's residence hall houses at Michigan State University

HAS Item No.	House Analysis Survey (Part I) Item Description	Mean* (N)**	S.D.	Range of House Means***
15.	Support for and participation in intramural sports	4.38 (883)	1.96	2.41 - 6.14
16.	Success in intramural sports	4.68 (882)	2.16	1.59 - 8.17
17.	Level of academic performance or scholarship in the house	4.21 (882)	2.00	1.43 - 7.21
18.	The good times we have together	4.33 (880)	2.06	3.13 - 6.39
19.	Reputation of the house within the residence hall	4.21 (883)	1.78	2.28 - 6.00
20.	Contribution of life within the house to your understanding of issues, ideas, philosophies, etc.	5.41 (879)	2.05	4.32 - 6.88
21.	Social life and social program of the house	5.53 (878)	1.95	3.19 - 6.94
22.	Support for and participation in the social program	5.53 (875)	1.88	3.76 - 7.16

Table 1. (continued)

HAS Item No.	House Analysis Survey (Part I) Item Description	Mean* (N)**	S.D.	Range of House Means***
23.	The leadership of the Resident Assistant	4.23 (876)	2.13	2.43 - 5.83
24.	The leadership of the elected house officers	4.86 (879)	1.86	3.59 - 6.14
25.	Ability to study in the house	5.11 (881)	2.14	3.50 - 6.73
26.	Intellectual and cultural life of the house	5.74 (879)	1.89	4.26 - 7.09
27.	Friendliness within the house	3.33 (882)	1.76	2.31 - 4.91
28.	Opportunities provided to meet girls	5.59 (879)	2.10	3.06 - 7.30
29.	Value of living in this particular house	4.39 (880)	1.92	2.81 - 5.85
30.	Compliance of residents with residence hall regulations	4.79 (880)	1.78	3.46 - 6.15
31.	Your satisfaction with your roommate(s)	3.41 (877)	2.18	2.44 - 4.12

Table 1. (continued)

HAS Item No.	House Analysis Survey (Part I) Item Description	Mean* (N)**	S.D.	Range of House Means***
32.	Your general satisfaction with residence hall accommodations	4.13 (876)	1.98	2.58 - 5.54
33.	Your level of satisfaction with living in this house	3.91 (883)	1.92	2.63 - 5.30
34.	Your level of satisfaction with living in this residence hall	3.83 (882)	1.99	2.50 - 4.97

*Each item was scored on a 1-9 scale (1 = excellent, 2 = very good, 3 = good, 4 = tends to be good, 5 = satisfactory, 6 = tends to be a little weak, 7 = weak, 8 = poor, and 9 = very poor).

**Total N completing HAS was 884; however, individual respondents occasionally failed to respond to a given item lowering the N for the item.

***These data represent the range of the 27 house means on the items.

appear that, in general, the intellectual dimension of house life is not a prime factor in determining general satisfaction. Item 20 -- the "contribution of life within the house to your understanding of issues, ideas, philosophies, etc.," also received a comparatively low overall rating. In contrast, the level of academic performance in the house (#17) was generally considered "to be good." Apparently house academic performance and its intellectual and cultural life are two distinct variables.

The mean ratings of three items relating to house social life fell slightly below the "Satisfactory" level (#21, 22, 28). Item 25, "ability to study in the house," also received a relatively low rating, though like most of the items the range of house means on the item was broad.

It is significant to note that of all the house activities rated, as opposed to ratings of more general attitudes, item 15, "Support for and participation in intramural sports," was viewed most favorably.

House Priorities

Questions 35-44 of Part 1 of the HAS listed ten activities or problems which were thought to "require or invite the concern of the house group as a whole" (Table 2). Paraphrasing from the instructions from the HAS, each resident was asked to rank the statements in the order of the concern which his house group had shown for each of the activities. The rankings were to be based on the observations of the respondents. The activity considered to have been the most important was to be assigned rank number one; the next most important, rank number two and so on. Respondents were then asked to re-rank the items in the order of what they would prefer to be the most important activities of the group. Many of the respondents failed to rank one or more of the items. Their responses were consequently omitted in tabulating the data for Table 2. The items are presented in the table in the order of the mean of the ranks initially assigned by participating residents across the 27 houses.

Item 38, "Sport, intramurals" was generally considered to be the most important activity concerning the houses during the year, according to the mean rank assigned. In 24 of the 27 houses the mean rank of the "intramural" item was first or second in relation to the other nine items. In contrast, of least concern generally was item 39, the role of house life in broadening the cultural and intellectual perspectives of the residents. These findings would seem to be consistent with ratings assigned to similar items presented in Table 1, previously discussed. Study conditions within the houses were considered to be relatively important (#37), but only slightly more so than "arranging and participating in social activities" (#35). It is significant to note that for many residents, item 41 ("...the men regard the house as little more than a place to sleep..."), reflected attitudes in their houses more than group concerns for either house sponsored intellectual activities or house neatness. Though not considered in this paper, the mean rank orders of the ten items of individual houses suggested a substantial variation in the relative importance attached to the items.

Table 2. Mean ranks assigned by 789 residents of 27 houses to 10 house activities or problems. Residents were responding to the request to rank the 10 statements in the order (1) of the concern the respondent's house had shown for the item, and (2) of the respondent's personal preference of what should be the most important activities of the house.*

Item No.**	Activities and Problems of Concern to the House	"House Concern" Mean Ranking***	"Personal Preference" Mean Ranking***
38.	Sport, intramurals	2.71 (1st)	4.37 (4th)
37.	Study conditions of the house	4.06 (2nd)	2.27 (1st)
35.	Arranging and participating in social activities	4.16 (3rd)	4.27 (2nd)
40.	Providing assistance for individuals' problems (study, social, personal)	5.30 (4th)	4.35 (3rd)
44.	Discussion, enforcement and debate of rules and regulations of the house, hall and university	6.10 (5th)	6.79 (9th)
36.	Participation in and/or discussion of student government (hall, AUSG, etc.)	6.20 (6th)	6.38 (7th)
42.	Participation as a group or with the Hall in special events, e.g. blood drives, sitting together at games, projects, etc.	6.22 (7th)	6.48 (8th)
41.	Except for items ranked higher, the men regard the house as little more than a place to sleep and eat. Activities ranked lower generally do not concern the men.	6.26 (8th)	8.48 (10th)
43.	Keeping the house clean and tidy	6.38 (9th)	6.16 (6th)
39.	Arranging and participating in activities to deepen residents' understanding of issues, philosophies, the arts, etc.	7.56 (10th)	5.46 (5th)

*The mean rankings were based on an N = 789. If an individual responding to the HAS failed to rank one or more of the above items, his responses were not included in the tabulation of the means.

**The items are listed in the order of the total group mean rank assigned the items.

***Rho between the two rankings equalled .59.

Table 3. The operational definition of the climate of learning and related items appearing in the House Analysis Survey.

Questions 55-58

Climate of Learning

The following paragraphs describe what we will refer to as the "climate of learning" of a house. Read the section carefully and then answer the questions at the end according to your appraisal of your house.

* * * * * * * * *

House activities and attitudes on campus vary in the degree which these support or complement the mission of the University of preparing students to understand and deal with the problems and needs of the world in which they live. Think of this degree of support as lying along a line, at one end groups of residents, perhaps entire houses, whose activities strongly support a climate of learning; at the other end, houses or subgroups of residents who are not only uninvolved in such a climate but who also strongly resist its influence.

The descriptions to follow are not meant to imply that social life, athletics, and other activities conflict with a "climate of learning." Such programs may or may not operate effectively regardless of the climate. Also, students may legitimately feel that their life within the residence hall is their own to lead as they see fit and that "learning" is properly confined to the classroom and library.

Here are descriptions:

"High" Climate of Learning

Visualize a group of residents or an entire house where the excitement of learning, experiencing and growing literally abounds. Here exists an almost continual exchange of ideas, attitudes, discussions of art forms, new discoveries in science, political controversy, confrontation and discussion of values. "Bull sessions" are often deep and stimulating. Cultural activities, such as the Lecture-Concert Series and Provost Lectures, are strongly supported. Freshmen in the house rapidly have their intellectual horizons broadened and stimulated. Discussions of classroom topics continues well beyond the walls of the classroom.

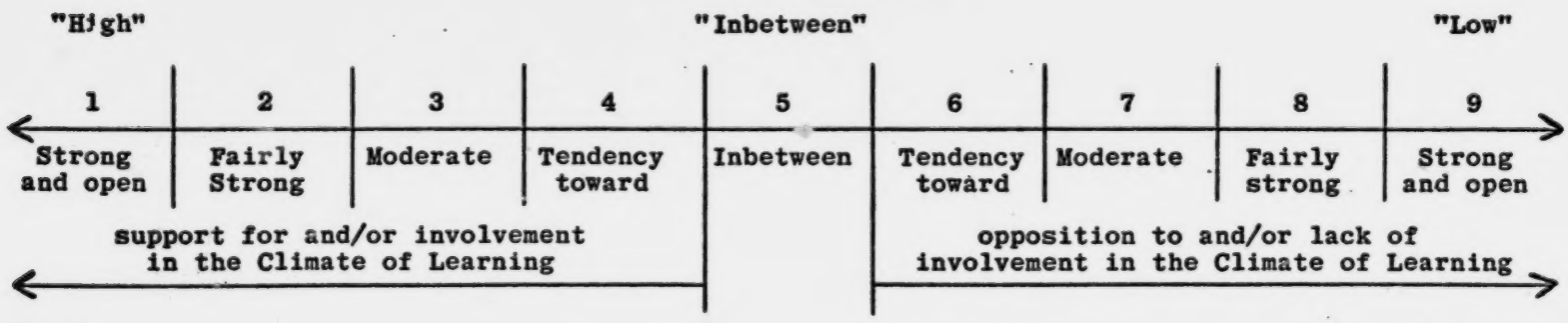
"Low" Climate of Learning

At the other extreme, learning is generally left to the classroom. It is not that residents don't study outside of class or work for their grades. It is just that little, if any, of the intellectual life of the University carries over into the life of the house. "Bull sessions" seldom have intellectual depth or substance. Attempts to stimulate more enlightening activities are seldom supported, and one who does might be regarded as a "highbrow" and out of touch with his housemates. Such a house may be a satisfying place to live because other characteristics of the house or subgroup possess great value for the residents. Social, fraternal or athletic activities may be prominent. But it is almost as though a social norm existed against too much involvement in academic learning. Selection of classes is often based on the ease with which one can get by. Freshmen soon learn the ways of the group and conform. Though they indicate concern over their studies, they are readily distracted from them.

The "Inbetween" Case

Between these two extremes one can visualize a third group or house whose activities and attitudes neither strongly support such learning experiences and intellectual excitement nor oppose them with any consistency. For such a group house life may seem to be independent of the "mission of the University." However, our feeling is that subgroups or entire houses tend to lean more one way than the other, though elements of both sides may exist in any given group at any given moment.

CLIMATE OF LEARNING



Questions

55. Where would you rate the general "climate of learning" of your house?

56. What has been the level of the "climate" which YOU have personally experienced through those with whom you associate the most in the house, regardless of the general climate of the house?

57. Where would you personally like the level of the "climate" to be in your house?

58. Where would you rate the general "climate of learning" of the residence hall in which you live?

There is a degree of incongruity evident between the two different rankings, one according to residents' observations of house life and the other according to their personal preference. The rank order correlation between the two was .59, suggesting a moderate correlation between the ratings. The discrepancies between the two rankings, that is, "what is" and "what is preferred," suggest the operation of an underlying contra-intellectual peer-group norm, a result of which may be a general inhibition of residents' involvement in intellectual activities. This may occur even though the personal preferences of many residents would be to elevate the level of intellectual involvement in the house. Peer norms would seem to be strongly supportive of intramural and social activities. They also seem to support adequate study conditions. But these are necessary to the attainment of adequate grades, a minimal compliance with the imposed norms of the larger social system--those of the university. Peer norms apparently lend little support, and perhaps even oppose, group behavior directed toward "intellectual" activities for the sheer sake of learning.

The Assessment of the Climate of Learning

It was hypothesized that the 27 houses would not differ in residents' perception of the climate of learning of their houses. The "climate" was operationally defined in the HAS; this section of the instrument is reproduced in Table 3. Residents were asked to "rate the general 'climate of learning'" (item 55) on a none-point scale, with response options ranging from "Strong and open support for and/or involvement in the Climate of Learning" to "Strong and open opposition to and/or lack of involvement in the Climate of Learning." The mean scores of each of the 27 houses are graphically portrayed in Figure 1. Results of a simple analysis of variance of the 27 house mean scores appear in Table 4.

Table 4. An analysis of variance of 27 houses on a measure of the climate of learning of the houses (HAS Part 1, item 55)

Source of Variance	SS	df	V	F
Between House Groups	385.764	26	14.837	5.198*
Within House Groups	2446.236	857	2.854	
Total	2832.000	883		

*Significance level <.01

CLIMATE OF LEARNING

"High "Inbetween" "Low"

Support for and/or involvement in the Climate of Learning

Opposition to and/or lack of involvement in the Climate of Learning

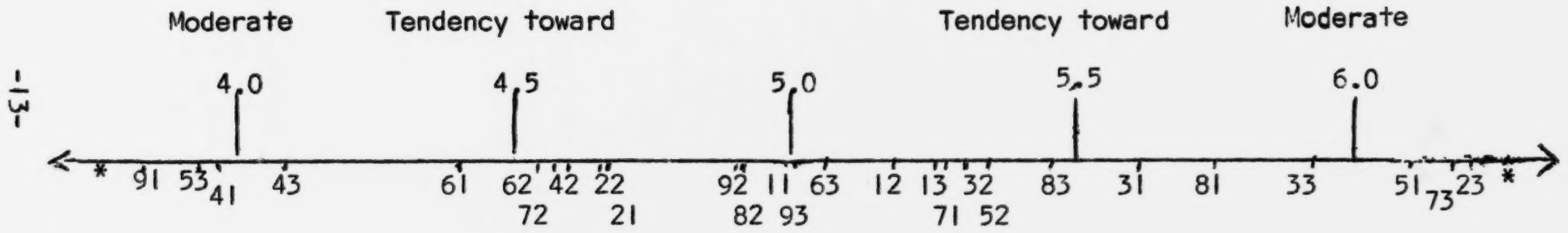


Figure 1. The location of mean scores of 27 houses on a measure of the climate of learning of residence hall houses (HAS Part I, item 55)

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* The 27 houses in the study were designated by a two-digit coding system. The first digit (1 through 9) indicates in which of the nine halls in the study a given house is located. The second digit (1 through 3) differentiates between the three houses within a given hall.

The test was significant well beyond the .01 level, indicating differences between the 27 houses in residents' ratings of the climate of learning. The mean of the total sample of 884 residents of the 27 houses was 5.01 falling at the mid-point of the nine-point scale. Individual house means ranged from 3.86 to 6.18.

Academic Performance and the Learning Climate

Residents' perceptions of the climate of learning may have been in part a reflection of the level of academic performance within their respective houses. Students were generally aware of the mean grade point averages of their respective houses. Whether or not this knowledge biased their responses to the "climate" question is unknown. The product-moment correlation coefficient between the mean grade point averages and the mean climate of learning scores of the 27 houses was .69, suggesting a fairly high relationship between the two variables. No attempt was made to ascertain whether or not the relationship would have persisted across the total sample had effects of academic ability been removed.

We did, however, consider the academic performance of freshmen residing in houses rated as having a positive or "high" climate of learning compared to the performance of those living in houses tending toward a negative or "low" climate of learning. The 10 houses with the highest ratings and the eight houses with the lowest ratings (see Figure 1) were formed into two separate groups for the purpose of determining whether or not there were differences in the adjusted academic performance between freshman residents of the two groups. Houses omitted from the test were those with mean scores on the item located near the center of the distribution of houses. Mean grade point averages of freshman residents of the high and low climate houses were compared in a two-factor analysis of covariance. The Michigan State University Reading Test and College Qualification Test total scores were used as covariates. The freshmen were also classified according to their self-placement on a measure of college types.[16]

As has been demonstrated elsewhere differences between the mean gpa's of the four college types were significant. Mean grade point averages between the group of high climate houses and the low climate houses, however, did not differ significantly; now was the interaction between the two groups of houses and the four college types significant. Thus, there was no evidence to indicate that the academic performance of freshmen with the effects of ability removed was better in houses with a relatively higher climate of learning than in houses with a lower rating.

Freshmen and Older Students' Preceptions of the Climate

Residents' responses to the measure of house climate of learning were not totally independent of the measure of freshman academic performance. These

same freshmen whose gpa's were compared in the previous test constituted a large proportion of those responding to the House Analysis Survey. The question was thus raised: "Did freshmen tend to perceive the climate of learning across the houses differently than older students?" If yes, then the mean report of the climate for a given house would be biased because of the disproportionately large number of freshmen in several of the houses.

Three tests were made. The responses of freshmen on the climate of learning item were compared to those of older students through a simple analysis of variance. Likewise responses of freshmen in the houses with positive climates of learning were compared to those of older students in the same houses. And a similar test was made between freshmen and older students in the negative climate houses. Results are presented in Table 5. Results of the analyses indicated that in none of the three cases did significant differences exist. It would therefore seem that the responses of freshmen on the measure of climate of learning were generally consistent with the responses of older students. This would also suggest the reliability of the climate of learning construct in noting the agreement between the observations of both freshmen and older students.

The product-moment correlation coefficient between house mean responses on the climate of learning measure and the proportion of freshman residents in each of the houses was computed. The resultant -.52r indicated a moderate inverse relationship; simple stated, the higher the proportion of freshmen in the house the lower the perceived climate of learning. One could surmise that the influence of older students in a house tends to improve the climate of learning.

The product-moment correlation between the mean house gpa of freshmen and the proportion of freshmen per house was not significant (-.09). Thus there was no indication that a larger number of older students in the house influenced the actual level of freshman academic performance, even though the climate may have been enhanced.

e Individually Perceived Learning Climate

Residents were asked to respond to the question (HAS Pt. 1, #56): "What has been the level of the 'climate' which YOU have personally experienced through those with whom you associate the most in the house, regardless of the general climate of the house?" The total group mean on the item was 4.11, indicating that their experience tended toward some "involvement in the Climate of Learning." It would also suggest that their personal experiences more favorably reflected a climate of learning than their group experiences in the house, as was indicated by their ratings of the house climate (M=5.01). The influence of house or peer group norms may explain in part the discrepancy between the individually experienced climate and the group climate reported by residents. As has been suggested, these norms tend to be contra-intellectual and would dictate compliance in the individual's behavior in the group. But such an atmosphere would not necessarily govern an individual's actions in his more intimate associations.

Table 5. Three analyses of variance of responses to the measure of house climate of learning between freshmen and older residents

Source of Variance	SS	df	V	F
	Comparison Using the Total Sample			
Between Groups	.215	1	.216	.067
Within Groups	2825.744	882	3.204	
Total	2825.959	883		

(N_{frosh}=427, M_{frosh}=4.99; $N_{older\ grp.}$=457, $M_{older\ grp.}$=5.02)*

	Residents of High Climate Houses			
Between Groups	2.008	1	2.008	.749
Within Groups	836.438	312	2.681	
Total	838.446	313		

(N_{frosh}=113, M_{frosh}=4.38; $N_{older\ grp.}$=201, $M_{older\ grp.}$=4.21)*

	Residents of Low Climate Houses			
Between Groups	8.005	1	8.005	2.778
Within Groups	763.598	265	2.882	
Total	771.603	266		

(N_{frosh}=133, M_{frosh}=5.59; $N_{older\ grp.}$=134, $M_{older\ grp.}$=5.94)*

*"M" represents the mean of the group, "N" the number in the group.

Residents were asked where they would "personally like the level of the 'climate' to be in" they house (HAS Pt. 1, #57). The mean of the responses was 2.75 indicating a "tendency toward" or "moderate" "support for and/or involvement in the Climate of Learning." Unless there were other factors operating, it would seem that residents were generally willing to support a climate somewhat more intense than that which they indicated to actually exist in their houses. But apparently their willingness did not reflect a level of motivation sufficiently strong to overcome the existing situation, nor to result in their moving to a more satisfactory environment during the year.

House Cohesion and the Climate of Learning

We considered the relationship between house cohesion and the climate of learning. Product-moment correlations between house mean scores on the climate of learning measure and four HAS items thought to reflect house cohesion are listed in Table 6. The climate measure was significantly correlated with each item. Positive ratings of the climate were likely to be associated with more cohesive houses (negative correlations in Table 6 are a function of the directionality of scoring of the items). No causal relationship between climate and cohesion was assumed however. Their correlation may have been a function of still another set of conditions.

General Observations and Conclusions

Following is a summary of several general observations and conclusions relating to the climate of learning and dimensions of peer group influence in residence groups.

1. The characteristics of residence hall groups vary extensively and along several dimensions, though the specifics of these differences are not elaborated here.

2. The House Analysis Survey and/or similar approaches to the assessment of inter-house and hall differences appear to be useful in studying the characteristics and impact of residence hall life, though the instrument is in need of refinement.

3. Undertones of what was interpreted as a pervasive anti- or at least non-intellectual behavioral norm impinging on the students were observed in the study. For instance, intramural sports as a concern of the houses generally was well sanctioned. Conversely, intellectual activities generally received scant attention. Concern for study conditions within the house was evidenced, but may well have been a reflection of what Hodgkins described as necessary in order to meet the minimal level of compliance required by the institution. In order for a student to remain in the institution, he necessarily had to achieve at least to a specified level or be withdrawn from the environment.

Table Intercorrelations of house mean scores on a measure of the climate of learning and on four measures of house cohesion*

Variable	2	3	4	5
1. Where would you rate the general "climate of learning" of your house?	.46	-.54	-.73	.75
2. Your level of satisfaction with living in this house		-.50	-.48	.51
3. When it comes right down to it, I really have little allegiance to either my residence hall or my house			.85	-.75
4. I would prefer to move to a different house.				-.79
5. There are 8 to 12 houses in your residence hall. Where would you rate your house <u>generally</u> in contrast to the other houses in the hall?				

*All of the product-moment correlations are significant beyond the .05 level.

The environment itself offered many more enticing rewards (at least for some) than the attainment of grades.

4. Houses differ in their level of academic performance primarily as a function of the academic ability of residents. However, academic ability must be regarded as an input variable and generally does not adequately reflect student growth and development.

5. Houses differ in their climate of learning as perceived by residents. The differences to some extent reflect the academic ability of at least the freshman residents. Nevertheless, freshmen and older residents tend to agree on the level of the climate within their houses.

6. The proportion of freshman students is related to residents' perception of the climate of learning. The higher the proportion of freshmen, the lower tends to be the perception of the climate of learning. This would argue against all-freshman houses or halls to the extent that a favorable climate of learning represents a desirable condition.

7. The climate of learning has no demonstrable effect on freshman academic performance when the influence of academic ability is removed.

8. The climate of learning has no demonstrable effect on freshman intellectual disposition as measured by four scales of the Omnibus Personality Inventory.

9. Nor is any interaction between students' subculture orientations and the learning climate indicated.

10. The climate of learning is related to measures of house cohesion, though, as suggested by Stogdill, both cohesion and the climate of learning (as a measure of group productivity -- in Stodgill's terms) may be products of the input-characteristics of the residents or other environmental characteristics rather than functions of each other.

11. The variation in residents' levels of satisfaction and their degree of identification with their houses suggest that the houses do function as reference groups for some but not for all residents. Within a house conditions may be such that a general level of cohesion, satisfaction, and group identification may be very high, indicating that the house has become a reference group for perhaps the majority of its residents. In other houses conditions may be such that the house is literally little more than a place where residents sleep.

12. The houses generally seem to foster positive interpersonal relationships between residents. As indicated by Festinger, Schachter and Back, this is a prerequisite in order for an informal group to influence members' behavior and, thus, function as a reference group. But need satisfaction was not complete within the houses. Many residents indicated dissatisfaction with the social programs and life of their houses (though a given house may have received a high average rating). Many residents indicated an interest in a

better intellectual climate within the houses, though they apparently did not oppose the more prevalent non-intellectual norms of the student subculture in an overt fashion.

An inability to fully meet the social needs of residents may explain why fraternities seem to succeed in demanding and getting a higher level of compliance with their standards of behavior than is the case in the residence halls (at least for the collegiately inclined student who by definition values social norms to a higher degree than many of his peers.)

Likewise an inability to fully satisfy latent intellectual needs, even though residents acquiesce to the social norms of the house, may account for part of the yearly turnover of residents. It would also echo the conclusions of Van der Ryn and Silverstein who felt that too frequently conditions within residence halls alienate the very students whose presence in the hall (were they to remain) would positively influence the climate.[17]

13. The above conclusions argue for diversity in programs and opportunities within the houses and residence hall program generally. Rigidity, forced conformity and narrowness of program may result in the exclusion of many students from an identification with the hall. And the impact of positive and educative house and hall programs would be deluded.

14. The results do not demonstrate any profound outcomes of the residence hall experience in terms of discernible academic and intellectual influence. There were some suggestions that need satisfaction within the house is related to personal growth and development. The preceding is not in any way intended to disparage other outcomes of residence hall and house life. But it does underscore the need to more carefully evaluate both the assumed relationship of various hall and house programs to desired outcomes and the philosophical and empirical bases of residence hall operations.

Perhaps the secret of improving the residence hall experience and capitalizing on its strengths lies in four areas: (1) emphasis on existing strengths in terms of promoting and improving programs found to satisfy needs of residents, (2) providing relatively unstructured diversity of opportunity for varied experiences as part of the hall programs, (3) legitimizing intellectual behavioral tendencies of students as an alternative model to the often insulating and non- or anti-intellectual influence of peer groups, and (4) making explicit to the residents, particularly the freshmen, the subtle norms that do seem to influence their behavior.

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